

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH

March 12, 2013

**LAURA'S LAW**

Laura's Law (AB 1421) under Welfare and Institutions Code 5347 established a demonstration project for assisted outpatient treatment. Laura's Law, which is patterned after New York State's Kendra's Law, has shown tremendous success after just five years. Data conclusively demonstrates that assisted outpatient treatment significantly reduces severe consequences for participants, for example:

- 74% fewer people experienced homelessness
- 77% fewer experienced psychiatric hospitalization
- 83% fewer experienced arrest

This is even more critical since the passage of the Governor's Public Safety Realignment Act of 2011 which has placed a significant demand on the County's Department of Mental Health. Over 3,745 post-release supervised persons have been assessed by the Department of Mental Health and are receiving on-going treatment.

However, there are several features in Laura's Law that hamper the implementation a program similar to Kendra's Law in Los Angeles County. The limitations include:

1. Lack of State Funding – The legislation did not include any dedicated funds for implementation of AOT. Given the State of California's current fiscal condition and the subsequent cuts that county mental health departments have received, increasing the size of an intensive program such as AOT is difficult;
2. Restriction on County's Use of MHSA Funds and Other Funding Sources – Restrictions preclude county mental health departments from supplanting or reducing other mental health services to fund AOT; and
3. Administrative Burden – Although Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH) staff has worked with the courts to improve the process to place a person in the Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) program, it is still a lengthy and expensive process. Persons who do not comply with an AOT order may only be evaluated for a further hold under Welfare and Institutions Code 5150. No other court based mechanisms are available for providing treatment to individuals who may meet AOT criteria but not 5150 criteria and refuse to comply with the AOT order. An AOT order itself may not be effective enough to produce compliance given the law provides few mechanisms for enforcement. An AOT order for treatment does not include authority for administration of medications involuntarily; an additional hearing and order by the court is needed prior to involuntary administration of medication.

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Currently, there is a bi-partisan effort to expand Laura's Law that lets counties pursue court-ordered mental health treatment for those who refuse to get help on their own and provide funding to support it.

**I, THEREFORE, MOVE** that the County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors direct the Chief Executive Officer to do the following:

1. Draft a letter of support to the California Legislature for the expansion of Laura's Law that allows counties to pursue the option of court-ordered mental health treatment for those who refuse to get help on their own and provide funding for such programs.
2. Direct Los Angeles County's legislative advocates to support Laura's Law at the appropriate committee hearings.

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